Media Impact on Society.

"Whoever controls the media, controls the people's minds." – Jim Morrison

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Date: Thursday, May 20. 2010

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Preface

Media's control on society - does anybody really recognize the impact it has on the world? The actions being shown within the media are influencing humanity. The news tells listeners what stories they think have importance; stories they want people to hear. The products being shown, the food being advertised, the music being listened to, and the clothing being marketed to the public, are all controlled by media. The releasing of this is being presented to each person depending on what media's perception is of what each person would be intrigued by. It is impossible to go a day without hearing a voice or seeing an advertisement aiming towards a purchase.

By proper definition, media is the form of communication by the use of radio, television, and magazines. These forms of communication have the capability of influencing people. Media control is the power gained over society by using these forms of communication. The control gained allows media the power to allow what information they want to share with the world.

All communities are being controlled by the media...

If asked "Why should a person care?" the answer would simply be: the information is shaping the minds of people everywhere. Every single person relies on these forms of communication to base their thoughts on or to gain information about certain topics, whether they are valid or not. Most of the population make decisions or thoughts based on what is being shared by reporters, ads, or products being released. It is shown by the lack of self confidence due to the media's definition of beauty. It can also be displayed by violence within the community, perhaps because of computer gaming where characters are killing or being killed, or the way people have been brought up. Some of these are a direct result of what the media has put out into the world. It is shaping the young minds of the world today, enforcing beliefs of what they should or shouldn't have and what products they should be purchasing next.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to scrutinize the media's ability, or inability to control the people, as well as to gather information to support the validity of what is being communicated or the lack of information being shared with the public. It will also be accessing the importance that media has gained in the lives of every person. This report will be discussing the many different ways that the forms of communication: television, newspapers, etc are enforcing thoughts upon people today.

This report is based on the idea of media controlling the society, and what solutions can be made to change media's impact on society. To do so, the report will go into detail about different countries in the world and how media's importance differs from country to country.

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Background

Dr. Geertsema, an assistant professor studying journalism and mass communication was asked, "Has media influence always been a global issue, and how has it progressed into one?" Ms Geertsema replied with:

Media influence has not always been a global issue. Before the development of the printing press in 1450, people communicated orally with each other. But even with printed materials, mass communication was often confined to the borders of a country. That started to change with the development of the telegraph and telephones. The real change came in the 1990s with the growing availability of the Internet and satellites, which made global communication possible. (Geertsema)

Media has quickly gained power in society by the ways of communicating with the public. As Dr. Geertsema said, the power has risen since the growing popularity of the internet and satellites, making this way of communication possible. The rate of speed that the media has gained influence is growing rapidly with the advancement of technology over the last 50 years. Within the past 50 years civilization has become more and more dependent on media in order to move forward towards to do daily activities (Rayuso).

Control

Control is strictly owned by few major companies. They are the companies that are given the power to shape our values, beliefs and decisions. The companies are capable of owning 95% of the media we hear of on a daily basis (Rayuso). If the company wishes to not publish a story, then they have the option to keep it to themselves and not share it with the rest of the world. Years ago there were more companies that had power over media so there was more diversity. Since then they have merged into the few big companies that have the most power. These companies own film companies, radio broadcasts, video games and even the music industry. These companies decide what is released to the public. All the existing companies are competing for a bigger audience.

Dr Geertsema was given the question "who controls the media?" and replied:

In terms of who has most control about what information gets out, people have different theories about that. Some scholars (Herman and Chomsky) believe that the media serves the interests of the political and economic elite. Others take more of a sociological approach, like Shoemaker and Reese, in their study of the hierarchy of influences. They believe there are several influences on the media product, including those on a personal level, news routine level, organizational level, extra-media influences, and those on the ideological level. (Geertsema)

Civilization does not put much thought into who has control over the coverage of media, but are more concerned about receiving the latest news. The controller of media doesn't make much of a difference in the mindset of the person. The companies in charge care about who has the role of control more than the readers or listeners do. The companies are dealing with competition for popularity. The question of who should gain higher control differs from person to person, "I think public relations is best suited to drive social media" (Bechtel). Depending on the work setting, a person may have a different view on who should be in control. With an example of a public relations worker, their opinion may be biased based on the fact that it is their area of work.

Religion in the Media

When asked which subject wished to be more touched upon in media, 41% of

respondents replied with religion and spirituality. The use of media with religion is

powerful when linked together. In today's age, religion can no longer control the image of

itself. The control that there used to be has now disappeared due to visual media

experience. In past times authorities could, in some cases, mandate how religious news

would surface. The press plays up the negative of a religion, pays little attention to many

faith groups, and fails to consent to experts for advice or facts (Barnes). As media's

popularity has risen it has been given the capability to affect behaviour and attitudes of

readers, giving them opposing thoughts on religion.

Thailand

Thailand is located in the heart of Southeast Asia, with a population of 63,389,730 in the year 2008. "The social media had grown beyond simple two-way communication between members and their friends or relatives. They had become an indirect marketing channel to promote products and services to specific target groups" (Pongvitayapanu). Rising from the earlier days of media in Thailand, the country has now gone beyond the simple form of two way communication. The government and military have control of nearly all the national terrestrial television networks, and all radio networks.

A newspaper article published in Mar 2010 by *The Nation* stating that the media freedom in Thailand was at stake. The government had kept the policy of not interfering with the media. Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva recognizes the importance of the Thai media. Under the order of ex president Thaksin Shinawatra, the freedom of media went from a model of press in Southeast Asia, to battered from all the government interference. Due to this, from the year 2001 to 2006 the ranking of media was close in comparison to quite a few African countries.

The continuation of this crisis has brought out the best or the worst in the journalists of Thailand

The Thai people have a high tolerance against hate media. This is due to the bias of the television or radio hosts making un-wanted comments. To make improvements on this, the stations may chose to sensor what is being told to the public.

Within the country, there are many sources of communication including radio, cable and satellite TV. BBC news states:

> The radio market, particularly in Bangkok, is fiercely competitive. There are more than 60 stations in and around the capital. The print media are largely privately-run, with a handful of Thai-language dailies accounting for most newspaper sales.
>
> A series of media reforms are under way, aimed at reducing military interest and influence in the media and opening up more opportunities to the private sector. (BBC)

A major part of communication in Thailand is also the internet, with 13.4 million users in March 2008 (BBC).

Bolivia

Bolivia is located in South America and is known to be the most isolated and highest country within South America with the indigenous people making up a vast two thirds of the country.

In reports from BBC it is said that, "Private newspapers and broadcasters dominate Bolivia's media landscape; their ownership is highly concentrated" (BBC). Much of the land in Bolivia is owned by radio stations. Bolivia was said to have much more freedom of media than the surrounding countries in the year 2007. They were now capable of discussing drug trafficking, religion and politics. Reporters rarely took advantage of this.

In the earlier days of media newspapers were a way to express political activism by providing information for the readers on the subject. The country is supportive of high levels of freedom of speech, which is why they also use media for launching political campaigns as well as criticizing political figures. The image the media portrays begins to shape the public's eye. With there being hundreds of radio stations throughout the country, radio is by all means the most popular way of 'spreading the word.'(Press)

Before the country gained its freedom, Bolivia's tradition in journalism began from the Spanish culture and rule. In today's time, the country has 18 newspapers that are published daily in one of the capital cities, La Paz. With the high amount of newspapers, there are only 55 readers for every thousand person. The reason behind this is the very high poverty rate as well as the illiteracy rate (Bolivia Press).

The political side of journalism can be quite dangerous. It has led to many incidents and even deaths of reporters. Although these dangers happen on occasion, the journalists feel the need to fulfill the obligation to the reader on sharing the latest stories concerning politics.

Uganda

Located in East Africa with a population of 32,369,558, Uganda has a literacy rate of 66.8% (CIA). In the country of Uganda the stories that are being published are those mainly related to environment or science. In the year 2007, environmental issues were a hot issue in society. This year was when protests were happening concerning giving thousands of acres of the rainforest to a sugar company, as well as a report in 2008; this was written by a researcher, John Magrath. The report discusses climate change and poverty. During his research, Magrath had learned that the journalists of Uganda had a lot of concern and anger against the issue.

The journalists who have interest in this issue are working on changing the mindset of the other citizens in order to make a change. The media is a great example of people working together to act upon an issue in order to make a change. Before this common interest between reporters, they were only focused on publishing the story.

With the magazines and newspapers not increasing at the same pace as the radio, the radio is considered the main form of broadcasting stories. Since the liberalizing of broadcasting in 1994, the quality of broadcast has increased. Within this period the magazines and newspapers enjoyed the freedom they had, along with the several papers launched at the time.

Canada

With a literacy rate of 99%, and approximately a population of 33,487,208

(CIA), Canada is a fortunate country. Canada has a different view on media.

While reading magazines we are faced with stories about celebrities and their

drama. Rarely are individuals reading about the government or the

environment. The media is affecting the Canadian society. According to a 2002

survey, 1.5% of Canadian women aged 15 – 24 years had an eating disorder (NEDIC).

Many of these eating disorders are after effects of impact of media. In North America

many people are being punished for their body image. They may feel self conscious due to

the images shown within media of the "perfect body". A Canadian citizen's role in media

is unclear, although Canada has all the forms of communication possible, television, radio,

newspaper, much of the media's audience is unwilling to speak up against the media's

portrayal of the world to what they see as important.

Solutions

In order to help solve media control citizens can speak up, fight for what they

believe in and gain control. People are capable of speaking for themselves, standing up for

what they think is right and to help solve the poor influence that the media is portraying in

the world today. There are many ways of doing so, such as writing letters to major

companies, not listening to the news filled with gossip or putting down those magazines

overflowing with celebrity news. If an individual is suffering from poor self esteem or

eating disorders due to the media's influence, the person should step back from the media

and move into reality and realize that not everyone can be that model in the magazine.

There are excellent examples of unrealistic portrayals of beauty within the media. For

example the famous Dove video named Evolution. An everyday woman transformed into

a model using Photoshop. People today need to realize this image is NOT real, and accept

themselves for who they are. Organizations such as Campaign for Real Beauty are trying

to break free from this generation's stereotypes, which prove to be a great issue in the

world thanks for the perception given by media.

Conclusion

On a global scale, the media plays an important role in expanding information to large quantities of people simultaneously. Upon receiving this information, every individual should take caution as to what they believe, and not treat all information as facts.

The reason for this is that the media is controlled by organizations, which are created to make profits and to gain a high audience watching their broadcast. Because of this many of the stories and information displayed are twisted in ways to make them more appealing to the viewing public.

The most common form of distorting these broadcasts is by purposely removing information that is crucial to the story, and without the knowing of this vital information the public could act in ways that would otherwise be avoided had the information been told during the story in the first place.

The public should always use caution when hearing about stories and receiving information from the media, and should always act in a manner that they believe is best. They should not base their thought on what they hear from the media, much of the information received could be inaccurate, depending on how much a story was put out of proportion.

Individuals should base their daily actions on their own choices, and not that of the media. In hopes that this essay has successfully opened the mind of all its' readers, it shall conclude in stating that not all forms of media have negative influence. The intent of this report is not to turn away individuals from the media, only inform them on the possibilities of what they may be exposed to.

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